

V.E. RANCH, INC.
GRAZING PERMIT
RENEWAL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
OR-05-025-014

Bureau of Land Management
Burns District Office
28910 Hwy 20 West
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Grazing permittees who graze their livestock on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management shall have grazing permits issued to them under the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4130.2(a)). Grazing permits shall be issued for a term of 10 years unless there is some reason which requires a term of less than 10 years under the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4130.2(d)). In this case, the V.E. Ranch, Inc., grazing permit will be issued for a period of 10 years.

The Three Rivers Resource Management Plan (RMP) of 1992, identified land that was available for livestock grazing. The land in the East Warm Springs Allotment (#7001) which is within the V.E. Ranch, Inc., grazing permit meets the criteria set forth in the Three Rivers RMP under GM 1.4, Page 2-37 (refer to Maps A and B). This action is also in conformance with applicable Tribal, State, and County laws, regulations, and Land Use Plans. (This analysis is tiered to the Three Rivers RMP and incorporates by reference, the information and analysis contained within the RMP.)

There are currently sage-grouse, pygmy rabbit, ferruginous hawk, desert combleaf, fourwing milkvetch, Malheur wirelettuce, Raven's biscuitroot, smooth desert dandelion, and/or their habitat present in the allotment under this term grazing permit. The current livestock grazing system addresses the needs of sage-grouse, pygmy rabbit, ferruginous hawks, desert combleaf, fourwing milkvetch, Malheur wirelettuce, Raven's biscuitroot, and smooth desert dandelion and, therefore, should not be in conflict with their needs.

An analysis of the grazing system used on the East Warm Springs Allotment (#7001) for compliance with the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management was completed in 2004. This allotment is meeting the standards and guidelines under current management practices.

CHAPTER II: ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to issue to the current permittee (V.E. Ranch, Inc.), a term livestock grazing permit to graze livestock on public land for a period of 10 years. The new term permit would be issued with the same terms and conditions as the expiring permit. This would continue the existing grazing management and would be the same as a no action alternative. Therefore, both alternatives will be analyzed under the proposed action. There has been monitoring of the effects of the current livestock grazing system in place within the allotment for a number of years. Rangeland trend studies have been read periodically over the past 30 years. Utilization and actual use data have been collected for more than 30 years. Monitoring data collected was last formally analyzed in 2004.

The data analyzed indicates that allotment objectives are currently being met.

B. No Grazing Alternative

The proposed action would continue current terms and conditions. Monitoring has shown that allotment resource objectives and Standards for Rangeland Health are being met. Therefore, while a "No Grazing Alternative" has been considered, for the above reasons this alternative will not be addressed further in this document.

CHAPTER III: DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The following critical elements of the human environment have been analyzed in the Three Rivers RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), are not known to be present, or would not be known to be affected by the proposed action or alternative: Prime or Unique Farmlands, Floodplains, Hazardous Materials, Research Natural Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas, Air Quality, Water Quality, Cultural Heritage, American Indian Religious Concerns, Noxious Weeds, Paleontology, Special Status Fauna, and Special Status Flora.

The following critical elements have been recently established and were not addressed as such in the Three Rivers RMP/EIS:

Migratory Birds: Some migratory birds are known to use the project area for nesting, foraging, and resting as they pass through on their yearly migrations.

Environmental Justice: There are no economically disadvantaged or minority populations present within the project area who would be disproportionately affected by enactment of the proposed action.

CHAPTER IV: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action

1. Anticipated Impacts

Grazing use for V.E. Ranch, Inc., would be authorized under a new term grazing permit. The level and timing of use by livestock in the allotment would not change from what was authorized at the time the Three Rivers RMP was adopted.

a. Migratory Birds: There would be no known effect on migratory birds by the issuing of a livestock grazing permit.

b. Environmental Justice: There are no economically disadvantaged or minority populations which would be disproportionately affected by issuance of a livestock grazing permit.

2. Cumulative Impacts

There are no known cumulative effects, either positive or negative, that would occur if a grazing permit is issued.

CHAPTER V: PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

V.E. Ranch, Inc., Permittee

CHAPTER VI: PARTICIPATING STAFF

Bill Andersen, District Range Management Specialist

Lindsay Aschim, Fishery Biologist

Jim Buchanan, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist

Gary Foulkes, District Planning/Environmental Coordinator

Terri Geisler, Geologist

Doug Linn, Botanist

Fred McDonald, Recreation

Nick Miller, Wildlife Biologist

Lesley Richman, Weed Specialist

Willie Street, Range Management Specialist, Lead Preparer

Scott Thomas, Archaeologist